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AUTHOR Hofstrand, Richard K.
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ABSTRACT

The narrative portion of this report summarizes the highlights of Phase II of a project to identify competencies needed by regional delivery system personnel in delivering career guidance. It identifies the six informational modules that were prepared during Phases I and II. Appendixes contain the six modules for guidance counselors/coordinators in regional delivery systems. Each module provides information on one of the following six competencies: coordinating student service activities, assessing needs for regional student services, organizing an education for employment student services committee, conducting an inventory of resources for student services, establishing leadership within the student services committee, and myths about vocational education. (YLB)

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FINAL REPORT - Phase II

COUNSELOR COMPETENCIES
for Regional Delivery Systems

Prepared by:

Eastern Illinois University
Charleston, IL

Submitted to:

Department of Adult, Vocational & Technical Education
Illinois State Board of Education
Springfield, IL

June 30, 1987

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FINAL REPORT ABSTRACT

PROJECT TITLE: Counselor Competencies for RDS - Phase II
DAVTE CONTRACT NUMBER: 26-RH-576
DIRECTOR: Richard K. Hofstrand, Ph.D.
FUNDED AGENCY: Eastern Illinois University
LOCATION: Charleston, Illinois
TIME PERIOD: 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1987

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PROJECT:

During Phase I of this project, the emerging competencies needed by regional delivery system personnel in delivering career guidance on a regional basis were identified. These competencies were identified through a priority-setting session with the personnel from DAVTE, EIU, the Guidance by Objectives staff, career guidance center directors and others.

Three topics of highest priority for Phase II were selected. Those topics were: ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTE, CONDUCTING AN INVENTORY OF RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SERVICES, and MYTHS ABOUT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. An informational module was prepared on each. The series of modules was named "INITIATIVES for Regional Delivery Systems." Printing of multiple copies was postponed into FY88 to provide DAVTE time to review and revise the content of the six modules.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:

The Illinois State Board of Education's policy for Education for Employment has spawned a development of regional delivery systems for vocational education. Career guidance on a regional basis also needs to be coordinated. The informational modules will help RDS staff to more easily and effectively coordinate those services and more fully implement the establishment and smooth operation of regional delivery systems. These regional delivery systems with coordinated guidance and services will improve the quality and expand the scope of the vocational and technical education being offered to youth and adults in Illinois.

PRODUCTS DELIVERED:

Ten copies of this Final Report to DAVTE by August 1, 1987.

Drafts of six informational modules. Based on mutual consent, printing of these modules will be postponed into FY1988 following approval by DAVTE staff.

Phase II

COUNSELOR COMPETENCIES FOR REGIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS

This project originally emerged from a prospectus submitted against an open category request for prospectuses offered by the State Board of Education's Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education (DAVTE).

The objectives of the project were as follows:

1. Identify the emerging competencies needed by guidance counselors/coordinators in regional delivery systems.

2. Develop concise materials on each competency identified.

3. Disseminate materials to appropriate personnel.

4. Assist the faculty of counselors preparation programs in various universities throughout Illinois to expand and update their instruction to include aspects of regional delivery systems.

The staff for this project included the following:

Project Director: Richard K. Hofstrand, Ph.D.

Project Researcher: David Dodd, Ph.D.

Resumes of each of the above staff members are shown as Appendices A and B, respectively.

During Phase I (FY1986), three informational modules were prepared. These topics were identified by project staff and by Ms. Nancy Harris, DAVTE contract administrator, to be exemplary. These three modules were:

ORGANIZING AN EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

COORDINATING STUDENT SERVICE ACTIVITIES

ASSESSING NEEDS FOR REGIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

During Phase II, (FY1987), three additional informational modules were prepared. Topics were identified by project staff and Ms. Harris. These included:

CONDUCTING AN INVENTORY OF RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SERVICES

ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

MYTHS ABOUT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

These modules are shown as Appendices C, D, E, F, G and H, respectively.

The printing of the six modules was postponed into FY1988 to allow the staff and management of the Illinois State Board of Education's Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education to review and edit each.

APPENDICES

COORDINATING STUDENT SERVICE ACTIVITIES

The Regional Delivery System (RDS) has potential not only for improving the quality of the vocational education programs available to students but also for improving the quality of student services. Even if the present student services are of the highest quality, a change in educational offerings will require an adjustment in related support services. Student services support educational programs and therefore will be affected by RDS initiatives. This module is designed to provide an overview of regional student services, to suggest staffing alternatives for providing coordination of the various services, and to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.

What Student Services and Activities Need Coordination at the Regional Level?

Following are several services and activities that are crucial to the development and implementation of a regionally-based student services program.

1. Establish the Student Service Committee and coordinate its regular meetings.
2. Coordinate the development of a regional Guidance By Objective (GBO) plan.
3. Coordinate the development of Individualized Career Plans.
4. Coordinate the development of a program for needs assessment.
5. Coordinate the selection and administration of student assessment tools (interest inventories, aptitude tests, etc.
6. Coordinate the development of a regional placement service.
7. Organize and coordinate staff development programs, such as in-service presentations of student services activities.

What Questions Must Be Considered Prior to Selecting a Staffing Pattern for Coordinating Regional Student Services?

As the planning grant director (PGD) of an RDS, you may find it helpful to address the following questions prior to considering the different alternatives for coordinating regional student services.

1. In what areas are guidance personnel technically competent and certified?
2. Is your SSC meeting regularly and functioning effectively? How effective is its leadership?
3. Are guidance activities reported regularly to the RDS Board of Control?
4. Do you have written regional guidance objectives (GBO)?
5. Do you have an Individualized Career Plan (ICP) developed for each and every vocational education student in the RDS?
6. Are regional interest, ability, and aptitude assessment instruments and procedures coordinated?
7. Are placement services available for students in your region, and if so, how effective are they?

What Are the Staffing Alternatives for Coordinating Regional Student Services?

There are four basic patterns for providing effective coordination of regional student services within your RDS. Each staffing option has its advantages and disadvantages. The pattern best for you and your region will depend upon a variety of factors, including: your own time and ability to coordinate regional guidance, characteristics of your student service committee (commitment, cohesiveness, initiative, leadership capabilities, etc.), the quality of your own relationship with SSC members and with your board of control, and human and financial resources available to you.

I. Full-time Regional Student Services Coordinator

A. Advantages

1. Coordinator would have technical knowledge and professional qualifications in students services.
2. The coordination between the PGD and the student services staff would be formal.
3. One person would be responsible for overseeing guidance activities on a regular basis.
4. Time would be allocated to accomplish responsibilities.
5. Line of communication to PGD is direct.

B. Disadvantages

1. Obtaining funding for position may be difficult.
2. "Grass-roots" support for program/problem solutions many be limited.
3. Involvement of committee members in direct control of the program is decreased.
4. Another level of bureaucracy could result.
5. Knowledge of student needs is indirect.

II. Half-time Regional Guidance Coordinator

Funding for a full-time coordinator might not be available in your region. A second staffing alternative then would be a half-time position for a coordinator. Such a position could be filled in a variety of ways. You might: hire someone interested in working part-time only (e.g., a retired counselor); hire a student services person from your region who is employed only half-time; assign one of your present student services staff this duty on a half-time basis; combine resources with a PGD from a neighboring region to hire one person to coordinate student services in both regions; or combine resources with a half-time special needs coordinator.

A. Advantages

1. Coordinator would have technical knowledge and professional qualifications in student services.
2. Coordination between the PGD and the student services staff would be formal.
3. Peer support of other local student services staff could enhance cooperation.
4. A person serving two regions may be able to share ideas and create consistency between regions.

B. Disadvantages

1. Obtaining funding for the position might be difficult.
2. Adequate time to implement all necessary coordinating responsibilities not allocated.
3. Person filling two part-time positions may experience role conflict or division of loyalty. Two part-time positions tend to become two full-time positions, which produces unreasonable expectations and undue stress.
4. Individual may not be expected to delegate work, or other student services personnel may be reluctant to help because they are not being paid to perform extra duties.
5. Knowledge of student needs is indirect if coordinator is not also a half-time student services worker in the region.

III. Planning Grant Director as Coordinator of Regional Student Services

You may feel qualified and capable of coordinating regional student services, in addition to your existing responsibilities.

A. Advantages

1. You would have greater control over the process.
2. You have a broader perspective of the nature and scope of Education for Employment.
3. Your familiarity with regional programs, resources and personnel is broad.
4. Your contact and communication with SSC is direct and formal.
5. No additional funding necessary.

B. Disadvantages

1. You may not be technically prepared and professionally certified in student services.
2. You may lack support from student services staff.
3. Your time available to devote to coordinating student services is limited.
4. You can anticipate conflicting roles and responsibilities.
5. Knowledge of student needs is indirect.

IV. Decentralized Assignment of Coordinating Duties

A final alternative is to assign the full responsibility for coordinating regional student services to the SSC. The success of this alternative would depend heavily upon several factors, including: a high level of commitment and cohesiveness among SSC members; substantial released time from their regular responsibilities; leadership abilities among SSC members; and perhaps most importantly, willingness of SSC members to accept new responsibilities.

A. Advantages
   1. SSC members would be actively involved in, and perhaps become more committed to, regional student services and Education for Employment.
   2. Knowledge of student needs is direct.
   3. No additional funding is needed.
   4. Diverse technical competencies and interests could lead to a better match between committee assignments and staff expertise, interest, and commitment.
   5. Solutions to problems are generated by those most familiar with and responsible for solving them.

B. Disadvantages
   1. Coordination is fragmented among a number of individuals representing various schools.
   2. Inconsistency and communication breakdowns may occur.
   3. A very dedicated and capable chairperson would be needed to coordinate the division of responsibilities.
   4. Negotiation of substantial released time for SSC members would be required.
   5. Reports may lack consistency.

What Specific Factors Should Be Considered in Selecting the Best Staffing Alternative for Your Region?

A variety of factors, including both environmental factors (financial resources and staff competencies) and implementation factors (goals, commitment, support, administrative organization, etc.), must be considered when evaluating each staffing pattern. The following chart summarizes the extent to which each of the four staffing arrangements satisfies the various environmental and implementation factors.

FACTORS	Planning Grant Director	Decentralized Coordination	Part-time Coordinator	Full-time Coordinator
		STAFFING ALTERNATIVES		
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:				
Technical knowledge & certification in student services	?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Resources needed	Time reallocation	Time reallocation	New money	New money
Time available to complete all tasks	Limited	?	Limited	Yes
Familiar with regional education programs, personnel and resources	Yes	?	?	?
Experience in regional report writing	Yes	?	?	?
Knowledge of student needs	Indirect	Direct	?	Indirect
IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS:				
Communication link with PGD	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Direct
Coordination between PGD and SSC	Formal	Informal	Formal	Formal
Support base for SSC	Administrative	Staff	Administrative	Administrative
Staff involvement in program planning	?	Direct	?	?
Staff involvement in problem solving	?	Direct	?	?

Note. ? = depends on the person or situation.
SSC = student services committee.

Conclusion

The task of developing and coordinating a regional guidance program is obviously an enormous but crucial one. Each of the four possible staffing alternatives for coordinating student services has its own unique set of advantages and disadvantages, relative to various environmental and implementation factors. Hopefully, this module has provided the information and structure necessary to enable you to select the best alternative for your region.

ASSESSING NEEDS FOR REGIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

What is a needs assessment?

A comprehensive needs assessment provides the data necessary to list regional student service needs in priority order, develop policy, identify annual goals, develop program objectives, and establish time frames. It takes into account all of the stakeholders, including those individuals, groups, and organizations who are or will be using or affected by the regional student services. It encompasses:

- -Program needs
- -Student needs
- -Counselor needs

What are the major steps in conducting a needs assessment?

There are four major steps in conducting a needs assessment:

- -Formulating a clear, operational definition of the mission of the regional student services.
- -Stating how the mission will be achieved in measurable terms.
- -Analyzing the structure and effectiveness of the present program.
- -Identifying and prioritizing what needs to happen to meet the program objectives.

The steps are taken in order. Without an operational definition of the mission, the program objectives may not be congruent and build on the mission of the regional student services. Stating program objectives is necessary prior to the evaluation of the present program so that the future is based on what ought to be rather than what is. The analysis of the structure and effectiveness of the present program provides data on the gap that exists between the real and the ideal and helps determine the degree to which the program objectives are realistic and workable.

What is involved in formulating the mission statement?

The mission statement of the regional student services is a clear concise statement of purpose and function. It answers three primary questions:

- -What are the functions of regional student services?
- -For whom do the regional student services perform these functions?
- -How will regional student services go about filling these functions?

What are the functions and what is the nature and scope of regional student services?

One way to answer this question is to address the needs of the program. Regional student services can be view from several perspectives, including:

-Organizational management
-Resource sharing
-Educational advisement
-The actual student services

The major issue in formulating the mission statement is in achieving consensus on how broadly or narrowly to answer the "what" question.

Who are the clients?

No organization, no matter how large or small, can meet all the needs of all possible clients. A mission statement requires a clear identification of what portion of the total population is the primary target. The focus of the services will vary according to the unique characteristics of each primary population and region. The primary clients of regional student services are:

-Students
-Counselors
-Education Administrators

Each of these populations has different needs concerning regional student services, and the needs to be met must be based upon the needs of the actual users of the services.

How will the mission be accomplished?

Once you know what the regional student services are and whose needs will be served by them, the next step is to look creatively at organizational ways to achieve the mission. Approaches might include, but are not limited to:

-Resource allocation
-Coordination
-Centralization
-Cooperation
-Sharing

One more important factor must be considered as a part of the mission formulation. This is the identification of the driving forces behind the organization of the regional student services. Most organizations have needs that exceed the limits of their resources. Decisions that are made about resource allocation are based on a set of priorities. A consensual ranking, with the most important driving force in first place, needs to be taken into consideration when formulating the mission statement. The basic driving forces that impact on regional student services include:

-Educational program needs
-Labor market needs
-Administrative needs
-Student services capability
-Resources
-Geography
-Support

The formulation of the mission statement is a consuming task but one that must be completed before the objectives necessary to organizational decision making can be established.

Who is involved in formulating the mission statement?

A mission statement should be drawn from as many points of view as possible. Certainly those that are going to implement the measurable program objectives should be included as well as clients who are going to use the services and administrators who allocate resources. Another module in this series, entitled "Organizing an Education for Employment Student Services Committee," addresses methods for dealing with issues of mission. The PAGE 2 materials, "Programmatic Approach to Guidance Excellence: A Facilitator's Handbook," outline a procedure that can be used to involve all of those who use or are affected by student services, including teachers, administrators, community members, students, parents, counselors, and labor market representatives.

What is the purpose of regional student service objectives?

Although objective statements can be "paper tigers" that are drafted and approved but never looked at again, they can also be a practical basis for the development of a comprehensive and accountable student service program. Objectives statements should specify, in the context of the regional delivery system, what is to be achieved, under what conditions, and to what extent. The Illinois Counseling and Guidance By Objectives System Handbook has a procedure called the "Plug-in Format" that can be used to accomplish this step. For example, an objective might look like:

> Increase by 25% the amount of time counselors have for group career guidance by eliminating duplicate record-keeping, thus reducing the amount of paperwork involved in tracking students from school to school.

How can you analyze the structure and effectiveness of the present program?

There is a wealth of materials available to help perform the tasks in this step. Data that can help the organization better understand its present capabilities and philosophies for doing "the work" should be collected during this stage. In essence, the output of this step is a definition and description of what the regional program is at the present time. Types of information that can be useful at this stage includes:

-Program information:
  What are the present functions of the student service program?
  What is expected of student service personnel, both formally and informally?
  What is the image of the current program?
  How much money is available for student services, and how is it allocated?
  What materials, staff, and facilities are presently available?
  What is the nature of the support that exists for a regional student services approach?

-Student information:
  What is the nature of the student population?
  What do students, parents, and teachers expect of regional student services?
  To what degree are current services used?

-Staff information:
  How does each staff member spend available time?
  Where is there duplication of efforts?
  What specific areas of expertise exist within the present staff?

The methods that can be used to collect and summarize this information and descriptions of actual instruments can be found in two major sources:

-Illinois Counseling and Guidance By Objectives System Handbook
-Illinois Career Guidance Handbook

How can this information be used to identify and prioritize needs?

In actuality this step is a comparison between what we ideally want to have happen as stated in the program objectives and our capacity to achieve it. There are two possible outcomes that may result from the comparison, each of which calls for specific responses:

-You may have identified an unbridgeable gap between what you want to have happen and your capacity to bring it about. If so, you need to return to the planning board and modify your program objectives.

-You may have identified both the parts of the system already in place and those that need to be developed or restructured. At this point you are ready to determine a consensual priority list of needs, which you can then use for policy and program development.

ORGANIZING AN EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

What Are "Student Services"?

Student services are a part of a total education for employment program and should be organized and delivered to help all students achieve maximum benefit from the instructional program. Student services refers to those services necessary to support education for employment efforts apart from administration and in addition to instruction. These service are designed to address individual needs to enable them to succeed in instructional programs, to make the transition from educational setting to the work place or to further work related education, and to meet the special needs of specific populations.

Student services consists of four components: counseling and guidance, sex equity, single parent/homemaker, and special needs. The function of the Student Services Committee is to strengthen programs and services within each component and to assure that students' needs are being met throughout the education for employment region. This information is intended to assist in the development a a strong, viable Student Services Committee.

What Should Be the Role of a Regional Student Services Committee?

A Regional Student Services Committee may perform numerous roles and functions, including the following:

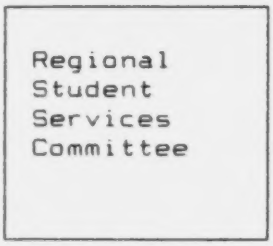
* To ensure that student services in a region are articulated in and among all levels of education for employment.
* To identify the needs for student services.
* To develop and submit to the appropriate governing board(s), a coordinated plan of student services activities designed to address identified needs.
* To facilitate the delivery of student services.
* To evaluate the delivery of student services in a region.

Who Should Be on the Student Services Committee?

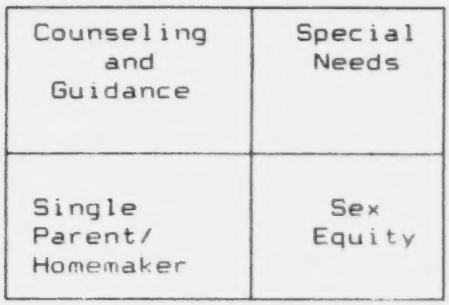
Every secondary school and community college within the RDS region should be represented on the Student Services Committee (SSC). In addition, the SSC must include representatives from each service component: counseling and guidance, sex equity, single parent/homemaker, and special needs. In regions where school enrollments or student services staffs are small, every counselor and special needs coordinator could be included on the SSC. Where this is not possible or would result in a very large SSC membership (e.g., more than 20), the SSC should be composed of at least one representative from each school.

How Could a Regional Student Services Committee Be Structured?

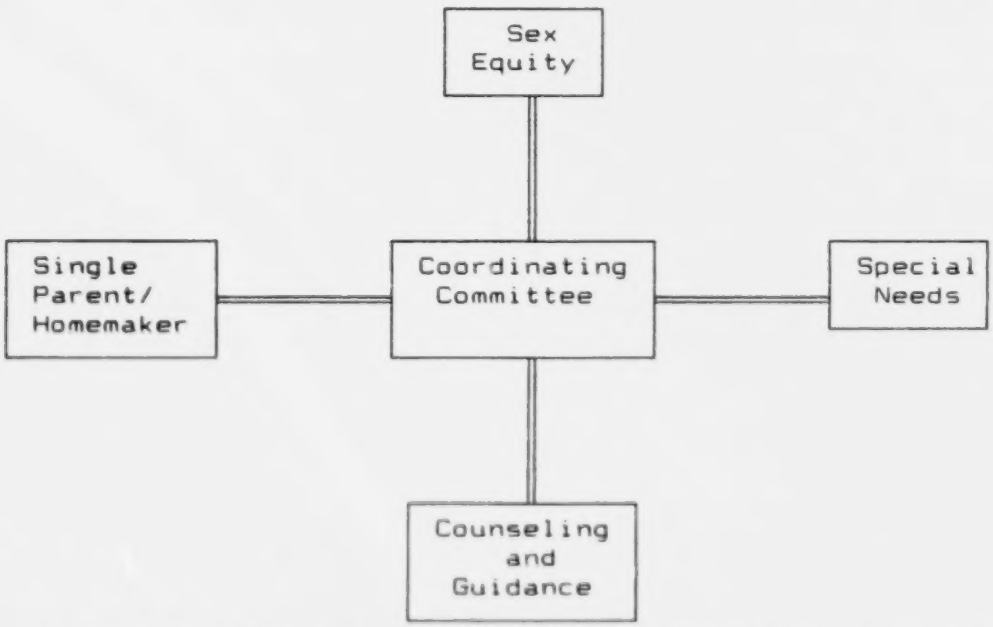
Several alternative structures for a regional student services committee exist. Examples are shown in the following diagrams, and others also exist. A choice or design of structure depends on the characteristics of the regional delivery system (RDS).



Large Group Structure



Large Group with Component Subcommittees



Component Committees with Central Coordinating Committee

What Tasks Are Involved in Organizing a Student Services Committee?

Although the list of tasks is lengthy, it can be reasonably subdivided into those tasks related directly to coordinating a student services committee (SSC) versus those that are more broadly administrative. To the extent that leadership of an SSC is delegated to others (see module entitled "Coordinating Student Service Activities"), the number of tasks facing an administrator can be greatly reduced.

Coordination tasks related to student services committee.

1. Identify needs of student services staff.
2. Organize in-service training opportunities to meet these needs on a regional basis.
3. Develop and administer a regional student services plan, including guidance and counseling, sex equity, single parent/homemaker, and special needs.
4. Establish a resource management plan.
5. Establish regional linkages to state and national computer networks.

Administrative tasks.

1. Provide initial leadership for establishing the student services committee.
2. Apply for Quality Assistance Plan (QAP), Disadvantaged and Handicapped, Building Fairness, and Building Opportunities grants to fund student services programs.
3. Determine methods for sharing student services personnel.
4. Define procedures for articulation, for example:
   - -course registration
   - -grade reporting
   - -transfer of student's records and others.

What Should Be the Role of the Planning Grant Director?

A crucial decision that must be made by each administrator is to what extent on-going leadership of the SSC should be delegated to others. The basic staffing options, which are outlined in much greater detail in the module "Coordinating Student Service Activities," include: (1) the administrator providing the leadership; (2) obtaining funding for either a full- or half-time coordinator; or (3) dividing leadership responsibilities and assigning them to individual members of the student services committee.

Regardless of whether the administrator plans to provide the essential leadership for the SSC or delegate it, there are several ways to provide direct support for the SSC. Initially, it is crucial that support for the concept and proposed activities of the SSC be fostered among local administrators. It is suggested that the planning grant director (PGD) works first with district superintendents and then with principals and community college personnel. Ideally, it should be the district superintendents who invite the selected individuals to serve on

the SSC. This strategy may increase the involvement and commitment of the superintendents and also "sanction" the SSC for principals and student service personnel.

Finally, the PGD must prepare for the initial meeting of the SSC, including selecting a location, reserving a room, arranging for refreshments, etc.

Getting Started: A Sample Agenda for the First Meeting?

Often the most difficult part of a complex challenge is getting started. Fortunately, the first tasks involved in organizing an effective SSC are straightforward and relatively easy to complete. Following is a sample agenda for the first meeting of the SSC:

I. Introductions and brief overview of mission of EFE and the purpose of SSC.

II. Solicit questions from SSC members regarding I. (above) and respond, or elicit responses from SSC members.

III. Divide group into smaller "discussion" groups of about 6-8 members, to deal with the following issues. Care should be taken to create groups that are heterogeneous with respect to schools and job specialities (e.g., Special Needs). Have each group:
   A. Develop a brief list of crucial committee goals for the current year.
   B. Develop a brief list of important topics for group in-service and staff development.
   C. Arrive at a recommendation for future SSC meetings, including location, frequency, day of week, and time of day.
   D. Arrive at a recommendation regarding kind of SSC structure (see page 2 for possible options) and kind of leadership (see module "Coordinating Student Service Activities" for options).

IV. Reconvene into one group.
   A. List and prioritize committee goals (from IIIA.).
   B. List and prioritize ideas for in-service and staff development.
   C. Arrive at a large group decision regarding future meetings (from IIIC). Based on experiences of currently functioning SSC's, recommended locations are a fixed, neutral site (such as the area community college) or rotating sites. A good meeting time is often Friday afternoons.
   D. Establish an agenda for the next meeting, which will almost certainly include further discussion and perhaps decisions regarding SSC structure and leadership options.

What Next? Providing Direct Support for the SSC

It is possible that the SSC will decide upon a leadership structure that would directly involve the PGD as coordinator. In this case, the PGD would obviously maintain an extremely active role in the on-going activities of the SSC. If any of the several other options for coordination are chosen, the PGD can still provide important direct support, in at least two major ways. First, the SSC will need assistance with "paperwork," such as meeting announcements, agenda, duplication of minutes and other materials, room reservations, etc. Assisting the committee in these routine but essential tasks will allow the PGD to maintain close, friendly contact with the committee and to demonstrate on-going support.

Second, the PGD can serve as the liaison between the SSC and the Board of Control, thus helping to maintain the delicate but crucial relationship between the two. Certainly minutes and important decisions of the SSC must be communicated to the Board of Control, and the reactions and any serious concerns of the Board need to be quickly communicated back to the SSC.

Third, the PGD can update the SSC as accurately and quickly on information and progress concerning EFE at both the local and state level. SSC must be fully informed if they are to be fully committed to EFE.

Finally, it is important for the PGD to regularly give recognition to the efforts and activities of the SSC, both personally and publicly. This can be accomplished through brief appearances at SSC meetings, special mention in EFE newsletters and communications, and news releases to both the local media and local school publications.

Summary:

Obviously, an administrator faces a major challenge in organizing the Student Services Committee. However, the necessary tasks parallel closely those involved in regional vocational education, such as obtaining cooperation and commitment from administrators, organizing staff and developing an "operating plan," and maintaining effective, open communication between all parts of the system, including staff, administration, and the educational and local communities.

CONDUCTING AN INVENTORY OF RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SERVICES

The initial task of developing student services on a regional basis may seem like a formidable one, especially when one realizes that student services encompasses four areas:

-guidance and counseling,
-special needs,
-sex equity,
-and single parent and homemaker.

The task seems considerably more manageable, however, if it can be conceived as one of organizing rather than creating resources for regional student services. Thus, the real challenge is to orient student service personnel to the availability of existing resources within the service region. This module is designed to suggest a specific plan of action for conducting a comprehensive inventory of regional resources. The following scenario, derived from actual experience, portrays one realistic, relatively easy approach to conducting a resource inventory.

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A high school guidance counselor in Illinois got a call from a woman who was a chairperson of a regional Student Services Committee (SSC). The guidance counselor was glad to hear from her, because he knew that Illinois was in the midst of organizing student services on a regional basis and that many SSC chairpersons were looking for resources.

The Chairperson explained that she was unable to find resources needed to get regional guidance services started. "We need to provide career guidance, sex equity, special needs and single parent-homemaker services for all the students in our regional delivery system, and we have very few resources. It seems like we have so much to do, and we feel like the Lone Ranger," said the Chairperson.

"The first thing to do," said the One Minute Resource Finder, "is to find what you have available in your own schools and communities. I believe you have more resources than you can possibly imagine. You should conduct an IBWA."

"Sounds exotic," said the Chairperson. "Just what is an IBWA and how much does it cost?"

"An IBWA is nothing more than an Inventory By Wandering Around. First, make a list of the resources you need. Then have people wander around their schools and communities and look for them. I'd wager that you will find hidden all over your region a lot of 'Lone Rangers' who have horses and silver bullets. Do an IBWA next week and tell me what you found," replied the Resource Finder.

The next week an excited Chairperson came to visit the One Minute Resource Finder. "You were right," she said. "We found classroom teachers at all levels and in all subjects who have and who are themselves career guidance resources. We found materials in classrooms, media centers, and libraries. We found materials, services, and resources in community-based organizations with missions similar to ours. We found resources and resource people in business and industry. In fact, we discovered that our problem is not what we thought our problem was. Our problem is to better organize our resources so that we can better serve our student population. You know," said the Chairperson, "what they say about you is true. You really can help people find the resources they need! Thank you for your help."

You are welcome," replied One Minute Resource Finder.

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What Are the Advantages of Conducting a Regional Inventory?

There are at least three very important advantages. First, one outcome of the inventory will naturally be the acquired knowledge of existing resources. Discovering firsthand about a previously unknown resource and then reporting that to others, e.g., the student services committee, can be a very valuable and useful experience. Second, knowing "what you've got" is essential to deciding "where you can go." That is, before a realistic regional program of student services is planned, it is crucial that an understanding of existing resources exists. Again, it will be much easier to modify or add to the existing network of resources than to build a new network from scratch. Third, the process of conducting a regional inventory can be extremely valuable to student services personnel, in that it provides a natural opportunity for developing and strengthening professional ties between service providers across the region.

What Exactly Is Meant By "Regional Resources?"

There are at least five major categories of resources that apply to student services: methods (procedures & techniques), money (funds from various sources), people (human expertise), materials (written documentation), and machinery (hardware of various types). Existing resources from each category can probably be located within your region for each of the four areas of students services: guidance, special needs, sex equity, and single parent homemaker.

What Are Some More Specific Examples of Resources?

People are probably the best single resource for student services. Obvious examples include student services personnel themselves and classroom teachers. Less obvious examples can be identified by focusing on potential program resources within the region. Besides educational resources, such as Educational Service Centers, community college programs, and Career Guidance Centers, there are a variety of state and local agencies that are likely to provide programs relevant to student services. These include mental health, public health, transportation, rehabilitation, children and family services, YMCA and YWCA's, and JTPA.

Local business and industry are another excellent source of resources. Most are willing to share, usually at their expense, their people, expertise and equipment.

Of course, important people resources, as well as money, materials, and perhaps machinery resources, are likely to be found within every effective program or agency. It is particularly likely that many of the above agencies would have existing programs relevant to special needs and single parent homemakers. Further examples and a good checklist of potential resources can be found in Section II-25 of the Illinois Career Guidance Handbook.

What Is the First Step Necessary to the Regional Inventory?

A first step in conducting a regional inventory of resources is to construct a large chart with the five resource areas listed across the top and the four areas of student services listed vertically on the left side. (See chart below.) The task of the inventory could then be clearly divided into either 4 (corresponding to the student services areas) or 20 (area by resource) subtasks. Assuming that the inventory would be conducted by several people, such as the student services committee, work assignments could easily be made. For example, each member of the committee might be assigned 1 or 2 of the 20 subtasks. Alternatively, subcommittees, e.g. special needs personnel, might be assigned the larger subtasks of investigating each of the five resource areas under special needs. Still another approach might be to link task assignments to particular agencies such as those listed above. Responsible staff would then pursue all the resources (program, people, etc.) within their assigned agency.

A wall chart enlarged from the one which follows could first serve as a master chart for assignments. As assignments are completed, the chart could be adapted into a working master list of resources.

RESOURCES INVENTORY CHART

	huManpower	Methods	Materials	Machinery	Money
Counseling & Guidance					
Building Sex Fairness					
Single Parent/ Homemaker					
Handicapped					
Disadvantaged					

What is the Second Step in the Regional Inventory?

After task assignments have been made and completed, the next step would be to share the collected information with the Student Services Committee. This process will obviously provide for information exchange, but it can also stimulate brainstorming that will help fill gaps that might exist in the inventory. At this stage it is also valuable to compile a summary of existing resources, perhaps in booklet form, that could be distributed to all student service personnel within the region. Besides its informational value, such a booklet could serve an important "public relations" function with respect to the Board of Control and the public.

What is the Final Step in the Regional Inventory?

The regional inventory should not be considered a "final product." It will only be valuable if it translates into a realistic plan of action. The inventory combined with a well-conducted regional needs assessment provides the necessary foundation for the development of a viable regional student services plan. Another module in this series, entitled, "From Needs to Programs," addresses this next stage in the process of providing regional student services.

ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

This module is designed to facilitate effective leadership within a regionally-based student service committee (SSC). Assumptions of this module are that the concept of SSC is well understood, that members of the SSC have been selected and have agreed to participate, that the planning grant director has already organized and conducted the first meeting of the SSC (see module entitled "Organizing an Education for Employment Student Services Committee). This module is specifically written for those individuals who will be assuming leadership roles in the SSC, either as the SSC coordinator or as committee chairpersons.

Groups have both task needs (to perform tasks effectively and efficiently) and maintenance needs (the personal and socioemotional needs of group members). Both sets of needs must be recognized and addressed for groups to function successfully. Much of the material in this module is borrowed from Tuckman and Jensen's (1977) model of group development, which claims that task groups develop through four predictable stages before adjourning: forming, storming, norming, and performing. This module focuses primarily on methods of addressing maintenance needs and facilitating the SSC during the first three stages of group development.

Planning to Plan - the FORMING Stage

A common tendency among newly formed groups is to immediately "get on with it," that is, define the task at hand and begin working on it. A reason for this may be that group members are uncomfortable with each other and their new group, and focusing on the task distracts them from their uneasiness. The group leader should be aware that effective groups must "understand themselves" before they can successfully function as a work group. Groups that fail to take the time to form properly, to address philosophical and value differences between members, and to develop consensual norms may later perform very ineffectively, because members are pulling against each other rather than in unison.

Ideally, an all-day workshop or even a retreat may be recommended to really allow group members to interact and get to know each other. The initial sessions should not be business meetings nor social gatherings but should encourage interaction in which individual members honestly share their personal perspectives and concerns about regional student services and about the SSC. Following is a partial list of specific questions that will foster this exploration of values and concerns.

1. Why are we <u>really</u> forming this SSC (or this committee)?
2. How optimistic are we about its success?
3. How can this structure actually help our students?
4. How can this structure help us as professionals and individuals?
5. How much support do we have and do we need from our local administrators?
6. What do we need to do in order to increase our own level of commitment to the concept of providing regional student services?

Addressing these questions will serve at least two important functions for the group. First, it will provide the structure by which group members can begin to connect with and respond to each other; a natural result is that group formation and identity occurs. Secondly, the group will begin to recognize and process the diverse functions that the SSC might potentially serve, even beyond the delivery of regional student services. For example, in addition to functioning as a group that plans and executes student services, the group may function as a support/networking group for individual members, as a resource group, and as a problem-solving group. A likely result of an open discussion of commitment and concern will be an increase in interest and enthusiasm for the SSC and/or the subcommittee. On the other hand, conflict and even open hostility may emerge, as members experience and react to the ideas, outlooks, and perspectives of each other.

Auditing Values - the STORMING Stage

Although inexperienced group leaders often try to avoid or divert group conflict, "storming" is a necessary, even valuable group process. Groups typically resolve their conflicts on their own, in due time, and a common result of such storming is an increase in group cohesion and commitment. Conflict often involves differences in individual values or perceptions of reality.

Following is a suggested group activity designed to encourage group members to explore and share their values regarding forces that shape the delivery of student services.

1. After briefly introducing this exercise, have each group member independently rank order the importance of each of the following forces that potentially affect the delivery of student services. In ordering the items, group members should be guided by their own personal values, rather than what they feel their colleagues or administrators might believe.
    a. Administrative needs (e.g., scheduling).
    b. Programming needs of vocational education.
    c. Educational goal planning.
    d. Special needs.
    e. Career guidance needs.
    e. Crisis intervention (e.g., personal counseling related to crisis).
    g. Counselor preparation and training.
    h. Graduation requirements.
    i. College entrance requirements.
2. Next tabulate the results, preferably on a large chalk board or sheet of newsprint to facilitate discussion. A useful technique is to have each member indicate their own personal ratings on the board and make brief comments.
3. Follow this with adequate time for group discussion regarding these personal values. Then encourage the group to discuss their perceptions of how state and local administrators might have rank ordered these forces.
4. Finally, the group might discuss what effects these individual and organizational values might have on the functioning of the SSC, and in turn what effect an effective SSC might have on organizational values.

Mission Formulation - the NORMING Stage

At this point in the group's development, the crucial question becomes: "Given our level of commitment, our personal values, and our understanding of forces that influence guidance services, what functions can our SSC (or committee) realistically perform?" The group should then begin to focus on describing and defining the tasks and responsibilities assigned to them. The following issues need to be addressed.

1. What should we try to achieve (task outline)?
2. When should we try to achieve it (time line)?
3. How should labor be divided?

In addition, several norms related to group maintenance should be considered, e.g., frequency and location of meetings, expectations regarding attendance and communication, etc. At this point, the group should be ready to move to the performance stage.

Planning and PERFORMING

The group should now be ready to begin its task of planning and delivering regional student services. It is beyond the scope of this module to address specific tasks and methods of performance. However, a reasonable four-step approach to developing a working plan for the SSC or subcommittee is:

1. What is needed? (needs assessment)
2. What do we have? (inventory of existing resources)
3. What's missing? (contrast #1 and #2)
4. How do we fill the gaps? (a working plan of action)

More information on steps #1 and #2, respectively, is provided in additional modules, entitled "Assessing Needs for Regional Student Services" and "Conducting an Inventory of Resources for Student Services").

Summary

Some readers of this module may be surprised by the recommendations to spend considerable time developing the group through the forming, storming, and norming stages. "We don't have time to sit and discuss; let's get on with our task." Although this is an understandable reaction, the need for careful development of the group cannot be overemphasized. This initial investment of time in group organization will result in a more cohesive, committed SSC (or committee) that is better able to effectively and efficiently accomplish its task of providing quality student services.

Reference

Tuckman, B. W., & Jensen, M. A. C. (1977). Stages in small group development revisited. Group and Organizational Studies, 2, 419-427.

MYTHS ABOUT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Career guidance counselors know that people's attitudes about vocational education are often based on misinformation. Unfortunately, these attitudes often prevent students from benefiting from current vocational programs and may also prevent the development of better and more extensive programs. This module is designed to sensitize guidance counselors to misconceptions that frequently underlie attitudes about vocational attitude and thus help counselors better present vocational education to students, parents, and even administrators. Several popular myths about education in general and vocational education specifically are presented. Each is followed by evidence that contradicts the misconceptions.

MYTH: Students who don't enter college are educational failures.

Such a statement is true only if one assumes a very narrow definition of success, i.e. pursuing more education beyond high school. A common dictionary definition of success is "a favorable outcome." This definition can be broadened to describe an educational success as a person who uses educational experiences to cope successfully with various demands of living. We all know many persons who meet this definition of success without having a college education and, conversely, many college graduates who are not succeeding.

Extending this misconception yields a similarly misguided notion: "Students who don't complete college are failures." Approximately half the students who enter four-year colleges fail to complete a degree, and many of those who do obtain their degrees will have difficulty "translating" their college experiences into "success." The point is that college is neither a prerequisite nor a guarantee of success. Many people would consider owning or managing a business to be "success," yet about 40% of today's entrepreneurs have only a high school degree, or less.

MYTH: After high school, students either go to college or go to work.

This dichotomy clearly clashes with reality. Over half of full-time college students work at least part-time and many people who are employed full-time simultaneously take college classes to supplement or expand their job skills. In addition, a growing number of adults enter college for the first time after several years of success in their chosen career. (This option will be pursued further later in the module.) Those college students who have not developed job skills often experience an unpleasant form of "senioritis" in which they question the value of their college education and experience significant anxiety about competing in the job market. In sum, college and work are colleagues rather than competitors.

MYTH: Once a person enters the world of work, educational opportunity is over.

This "doomsday" belief ties in closely with the previous two misconceptions and indicates an ignorance of present day educational opportunities. Parents may use this argument in desperation to motivate their children to greater educational achievement. In many occupations, work experience opens educational doors rather than closes them. Employers often realize that further education for employees, especially if job-related, yields substantial benefits, and they may pay for part or all of the employee's tuition for higher education.

For employees, work experience itself may provide a valuable education; employees can often learn about themselves (especially their career interests and goals) and about the kind of higher education that is most appropriate for them. Thus, they may pursue formal higher education with greater motivation than they ever had previously, and as a result, their educational experiences can be highly rewarding. Veterans in higher education are quick to note a major difference between traditional age college students and "returning adults." This difference is not in intelligence or ability but is instead in the greater interest, motivation, and desire to make the most out of their education that characterizes many adult students.

In addition, many colleges are now offering special incentives to adult students, including more liberal admission policies, reduced tuition, and academic credit for documented career experience. In short, the common, dichotomous belief ("either work or school") is erroneous; in fact, many students successfully combine the two, either simultaneously or by pursuing higher education after establishing themselves in a career.

MYTH: School is for learning academics, not for learning job skills.

Job skills must be learned somewhere, and the learning of "academics" is greatly facilitated if it occurs in a context that is meaningful for the student. Educational programs that divorce "thinking" from "doing" run the risk of producing uneducated workers and impotent thinkers. "School," whether secondary or postsecondary, involves many things for the student, including educational, social, athletic, artistic, organizational activities. There is one common goal that almost all students share, however: They hope to obtain meaningful, rewarding jobs. Truly successful educational programs are those that recognize the important link between learning and the vocational application of that learned. Contemporary programs emphasize the importance of this link to students and provide well-designed, relevant, and utilitarian courses.

MYTH: Vocational courses are holding grounds for misfits.

This argument may be particularly destructive if used by administrators to justify poor funding of vocational courses or to discourage the development of better courses and programs. If "misfit" is defined as someone who does not fit into the educational program, then there are probably many "misfits" in academic programs of all kinds, not just vocational programs. The real question underlying this issue would seem to be: Is the student failing to adapt to the system or is the system failing the student?

There is substantial evidence that many students do feel estranged from the educational system. High School and Beyond, a large scale national survey of high school students, revealed that about 14% of sophomores in 1980 dropped out before graduation. The two most common reasons cited by both male and female dropouts were: "I had poor grades" and "school was not for me." The next most common reasons were: "offered a job" and "couldn't get along with teachers," for males; and "married or planned to marry" and "pregnancy," for females.

The above data do not tell us precisely why "school was not for me" and they do not tell us what can be done to reduce dropout rates. The data do make it pretty clear, however, that this group of students is dissatisfied with the educational system. There is also evidence (from The National Center for Research in Vocational Education) that the more vocational education students take, the lower their likelihood of dropping out of high school.

It is certainly unreasonable to suggest that improved vocational programing could eliminate the high school dropout problem. On the other hand, it does seem plausible that the dropout problem could be reduced if all students had access to educational opportunities that combined "learning" and "doing", thereby making education more personally and vocationally meaningful.

MYTH: "Vocational education is fine for the neighbor's kids, but not for mine."

This parental attitude is particularly pervasive and tenacious. Although it may not be possible to completely change this attitude, perhaps providing the parent with relevant data regarding academic retention rates may help. Consider the following information based on national data:

1. For every 100 students who enter 9th grade, only xxx % will complete 12th grade, only yy% will enter college, and only zz% will complete a four-year college degree.

2. The vast majority of employed individuals do not have college degrees, and many have excellent jobs. Furthermore, national employment trends suggest a large increase in the number of jobs that do not require college education.

National data are often interesting but local data can be much more meaningful. The following exercise can easily be completed, using data for your own school district or region.

Worksheet for gathering local data on school retention.

Select an entering year at least 9 years prior to the current year, for example, 1978. Record the following and calculate percents based on the number entering 9th grade.

	Number	Percent
Students entering 9th grade in 1978:		100%
Students entering 10th grade in 1979:		
Students entering 11th grade in 1980:		
Students entering 12th grade in 1981:		
Students entering college in 1982:		
Students completing college by 1986:		

These figures will provide only an approximate retention number, because they are not sensitive to "immigrating" and "emigrating" students. If your school district is small, you may be able to "track" the entire 9th grade class by actual names. For the college data, you may have to estimate by consulting with other counselors or with teachers.

Summary

Several misconceptions about education in general and vocational education in particular have been presented. By being sensitive to these misconceptions and knowledgeable of current educational information and statistics, career guidance counselors can work more effectively with students, parents, and administrators.